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ABSTRACT

The New Jersey Educational Assessment Program was initiated in 1972-73 school year to assess high school students' performance in the basic skill areas of reading and mathematics. The High School Proficiency Test (HSPT) will become part of the graduation requirement for the ninth grade class of 1985-86. This instrument is a more comprehensive basic skills test than the Minimum Basic Skills Test that is replacing. It includes a writing section, as well as items assessing higher level thinking skills. This report describes the HSPT. The results of the March 1984 test administration to all ninth graders in the East Windsor School District are reviewed and compared to state and district reference groups. Information on the population tested and a sample of the individual student report are included. The results of this test administration indicated East Windsor students were well prepared in areas such as critical and literal comprehension, and ability to organize ideas. Editing the written work of others was found to be a skill area requiring additional instruction. (DWH)

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NEW JERSEY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY TEST RESULTS

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Suzanne C. Harkness, Ed.D.
East Windsor Regional School District
November 1984

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INTRODUCTION

The New Jersey Educational Assessment Program as directed by the New Jersey State Department of Education is designed to comply with New Jersey Statute 18A: 4-24 which states:

> The Commissioner shall by direction or with approval of the State Board, whenever it is deemed to be advisable so to do, inquire and ascertain the thoroughness and efficiency of operation of any of the schools of the public school system of the state and of any grades therein by such means, tests, and examinations as to him seem proper, and he shall report to the state board the results of such inquiries and such other information with regard thereto as the state board may require as he shall deem proper, but nothing in this section shall affect the right of each district to prescribe its own rules for promotion.

Background Information

The program which was initiated during the 1972-73 school year has annually measured student performance in the basic skill areas of reading and mathematics. The program, however, has evolved through the years into a new testing program which includes a writing section. The "new test" which is entitled "The High School Proficiency Test" is a more comprehensive basic skills test than the Miniumum Basic Skills test that it is replacing. The HSPT includes a writing section as well as items assessing higher level thinking skills.

The passing of the new HSPT will become part of the graduation requirement for the ninth grade class of 1985-86. Until that year, the Miniumum Basic Skills Test (MBS) will remain the graduation test for high school students. Any student who does not pass the current MBS test is required by law to participate in the district's Compensatory Education program and MUST take the test and PASS it the following year in order to meet the state requirement for a high school diploma. If the student again fails either the math and/or reading sections of the test, he/she MUST continue attempting the test each year until the test is passed. A special review committee will be formed under state guidelines to review any student who has not passed All of the state test subtests by the time he/she completes grade twelve.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this report, the terms listed below are defined as follows:

1. Cluster - Clusters are groups of items which measure similar skills such as reading comprehension, pre-algebra, etc.

2. Cluster average - The percentage of students correctly responding to each item in the cluster

3. County (CO) - Mercer County

4. Community Type (CT) - Each school district in the state is classified as one of the following types of communities:

   1. Urban Center (UC) - densely populated with extensive development
   2. Urban Suburban (US) - near an urban center, but not as highly developed with larger residential areas
   4. Suburban (S) - predominantly single-family residential within a short distance of an urban area
   5. Suburban Rural (SR) - rapidly developing area, but still tracts of open land available for development
   6. Rural (R) - scattered small communities and isolated single-family dwellings
   7. Rural Center (RC) - high-density core area with rural municipalities surrounding
   8. Rural Center Rural (RCR) - small developed core area surrounded by rural areas
   9. Vocational (V) - primary emphasis on vocational training under a separate educational jurisdiction
   0. Regional District (RD) - an educational jurisdiction established to service several surrounding communities

   * East Windsor is classified as a suburban-rural district.

5. District Factor Grouping (DFG) - This grouping is based on the 1980 United States census to obtain a measure of a district's socioeconomic status. Districts are labeled from a low of (A) to a high of (J). Each district is assigned a FACTOR SCORE based on the community means of the following seven variables:

	East Windsor Average
1. Educational background age 25+	1 year of college
2. Occupational status of occupations	clerical, craftsmen
3. Per Capita average family income	$25,611
4. Percent of families below poverty level	3.63%
5. Unemployment - % receiving compensation	9.48%
6. Population Density per housing unit	2.78 persons
7. Percent urban population of district	0

   * East Windsor has a DFG rating of "H"

6. Items - Questions used to measure each test objective or specification. New items are written each year, but are based on the same objectives.

7. Limited English Speaking (LE) - A code used to specifiy students who are identified as having limited English speaking ability.

8. Special Education (SE) - A code used to specify students who are classified as handicapped.

9. Specifications - Reading, writing and math objectives which should be mastered by students by the time of testing in grade nine. The objectives were developed by a cross-section of New Jersey educators and noneducators.

10. Student Report - A sheet which contains each student's percentage of items correct on all subtests and responses selected. A copy of the student report is sent to the school and to all parents.

HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY TEST

The 1983-84 school year was the first year that the new High School Proficiency Test was administered to ninth grade students enrolled in New Jersey public high schools. As mentioned previously, the specifications for this test were developed by both educators and noneducators throughout the state. The cluster areas assessed on the HSPT test included the following:

READING (154 minutes)

1. Literal Comprehension
2. Inferential Comprehension
3. Critical Copmprehension
4. Study Skills

WRITING (140 minutes)

1. Sentence Structure
2. Organization of Ideas
3. Editing
4. Essay writing

MATHEMATICS (145 minutes)

1. Fractions
2. Decimals
3. Percents
4. Number Concepts
5. Measurement/Geometry
6. Pre-Algebra
7. Problem Solving

Methods and Procedures

The High School Proficiency Tests were administered to ALL ninth grade students on March 6,7 and 8, 1984. The test administration took place in the Hightstown High School Shally House gymnasium. Only those classified students who had specific instructions in their IEPs that they could not participate in standardized testing situations were legally excused from the testing. Make - up days were provided for those students not in attendance on the scheduled testing days.

Individual student results were received in May 1984 from National Computer Systems in Iowa. One copy of these results was forwarded to the student's parents/guardians while two copies were sent to the High School for permanent record folders.

Listed in the table below are the numbers of students participating in the HSPT test administration.

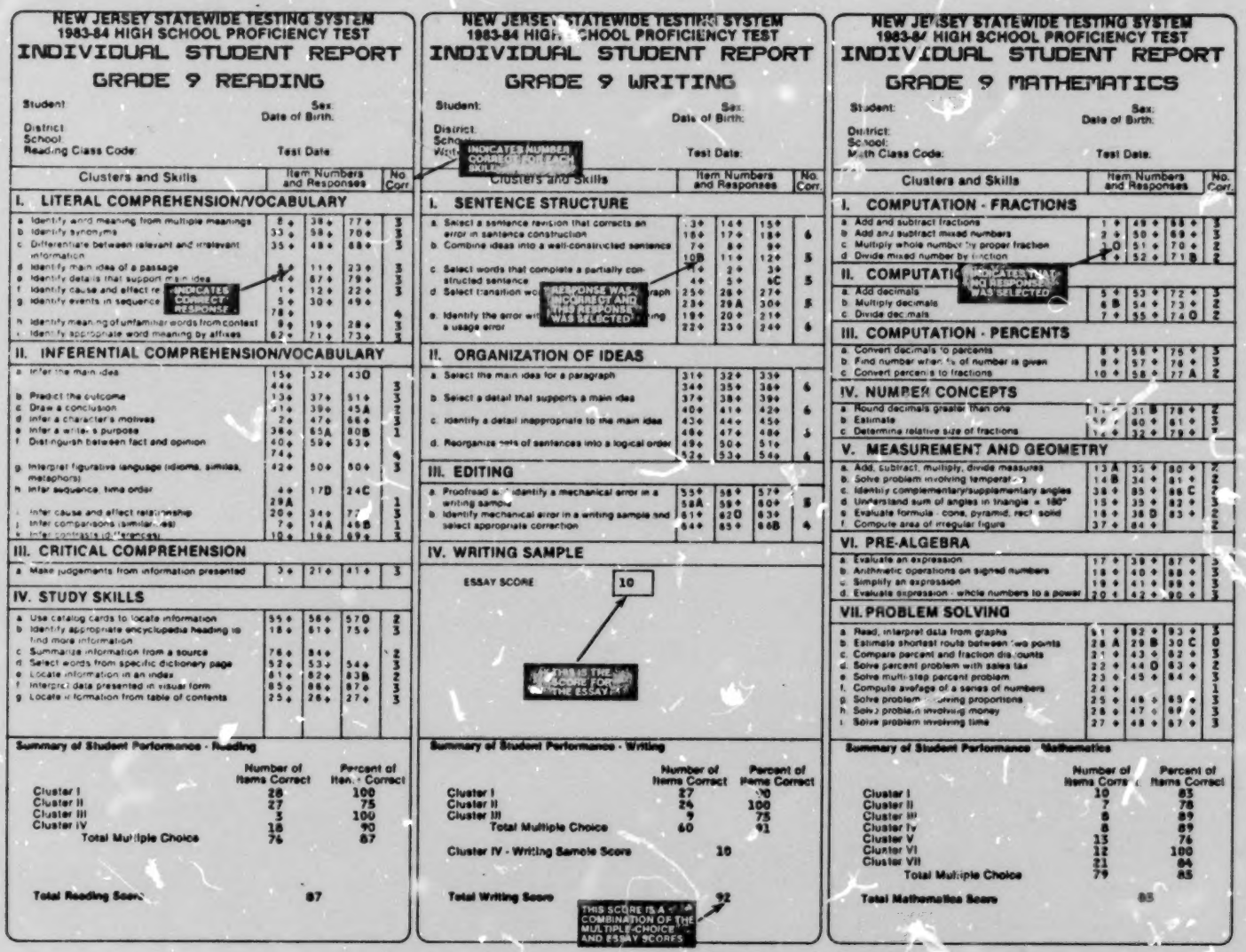
TABLE A
Population Tested

SUBTEST AREA	East Windsor	DFG "I" Group	New Jersey
Reading	427	8,869	86,416
Writing	427	8,864	86,509
Mathematics	427	8,855	86,515
Special Educ. Students	32	NA	4,469
Limited English	3	NA	1,313

* East Windsor is now classified as an "H" DFG group, however, the State used the 1970 "I" grouping for this year's data

A sample copy of the Individual Student Report sent home to parents/guardians is provided in Figure 1. Although no "passing" score has been set by the state, the report does provide the percentage of items the student answered correctly on each subtest.

In October 1984, the district was provided HSPT item analysis results by the state. These results were shared with the appropriate reading and math Content Specialists at both the 6-8 and 9-12 levels as well as with the Principals of the respective buildings. As has been the practice in the past, the 9-12 Content Specialists were asked to review and respond to the cluster/item analysis results. Their comments will be forwared to the State Department of Education as part of the district's review of the results.



NEW JERSEY STATEWIDE TESTING SYSTEM
1983-84 HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY TEST
INDIVIDUAL STUDENT REPORT
GRADE 9 READING

Student: Sex:
Date of Birth:
District:
School:
Reading Class Code: Test Date:

Clusters and Skills	Item Numbers and Responses			No. Corr.
I. LITERAL COMPREHENSION/VOCABULARY				
a. Identify word meaning from multiple meanings	8 ✦	38 ✦	77 ✦	3
b. Identify synonyms	33 ✦	58 ✦	70 ✦	3
c. Differentiate between relevant and irrelevant information	35 ✦	48 ✦	88 ✦	3
d. Identify main idea of a passage	11 ✦	11 ✦	23 ✦	3
e. Identify details that support main idea	14 ✦	67 ✦	79 ✦	3
f. Identify cause and effect re	1 ✦	12 ✦	22 ✦	3
g. Identify events in sequence	5 ✦	30 ✦	49 ✦	
	78 ✦			4
h. Identify meaning of unfamiliar words from context	9 ✦	19 ✦	28 ✦	3
i. Identify appropriate word meaning by affixes	62 ✦	71 ✦	73 ✦	3
II. INFERENTIAL COMPREHENSION/VOCABULARY				
a. Infer the main idea	15 ✦	32 ✦	43 D	
	44 ✦			3
b. Predict the outcome	13 ✦	37 ✦	51 ✦	3
c. Draw a conclusion	41 ✦	39 ✦	45 A	3
d. Infer a character's motives	2 ✦	47 ✦	66 ✦	3
e. Infer a write- s purpose	38 ✦	65 A	80 B	3
f. Distinguish between fact and opinion	40 ✦	59 ✦	63 ✦	
	74 ✦			4
g. Interpret figurative language (idioms, similes, metaphors)	42 ✦	50 ✦	60 ✦	3
h. Infer sequence, time order	4 ✦	17 D	24 C	
	29 A			3
i. Infer cause and effect relationship	20 ✦	34 ✦	77 ✦	3
j. Infer comparisons (similar, ea)	7 ✦	14 A	46 B	3
k. Infer contrasts (d "ences)	10 ✦	19 ✦	69 ✦	3
III. CRITICAL COMPREHENSION				
a. Make judgements from information presented	3 ✦	21 ✦	41 ✦	3
IV. STUDY SKILLS				
a. Use catalog cards to locate information	55 ✦	58 ✦	57 D	2
b. Identify appropriate encyclopedia heading to find more information	18 ✦	61 ✦	75 ✦	3
c. Summarize information from a source	76 ✦	84 ✦		2
d. Select words from specific dictionary page	52 ✦	53 ✦	54 ✦	3
e. Locate information in an index	81 ✦	82 ✦	83 B	3
f. Interpret data presented in visual form	85 ✦	86 ✦	87 ✦	3
g. Locate information from table of contents	25 ✦	26 ✦	27 ✦	3

INDICATES CORRECT RESPONSE

Summary of Student Performance - Reading

	Number of Items Correct	Percent of Items Correct
Cluster I	28	100
Cluster II	27	75
Cluster III	3	100
Cluster IV	18	90
Total Multiple Choice	76	87

Total Reading Score: 87

NEW JERSEY STATEWIDE TESTING SYSTEM
1983-84 HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY TEST
INDIVIDUAL STUDENT REPORT
GRADE 9 WRITING

Student: Sex:
Date of Birth:
District:
School:
Writ- Test Date:

INDICATES NUMBER CORRECT FOR EACH SKILL

Clusters and Skills	Item Numbers and Responses			No. Corr.
I. SENTENCE STRUCTURE				
a. Select a sentence revision that corrects an error in sentence construction	13 ✦	14 ✦	15 ✦	
	16 ✦	17 ✦	18 ✦	6
b. Combine ideas into a well-constructed sentence	7 ✦	8 ✦	9 ✦	
	10B	11 ✦	12 ✦	5
c. Select words that complete a partially constructed sentence	1 ✦	2 ✦	3 ✦	
	4 ✦	5 ✦	6C	5
d. Select transition wo-	21 ✦	26 ✦	27 ✦	
	23 ✦	29 A	30 ✦	5
e. Identify the error wit-	19 ✦	20 ✦	21 ✦	
a usage error	22 ✦	23 ✦	24 ✦	6
II. ORGANIZATION OF IDEAS				
a. Select the main idea for a paragraph	31 ✦	32 ✦	33 ✦	
	34 ✦	35 ✦	36 ✦	6
b. Select a detail that supports a main idea	37 ✦	38 ✦	39 ✦	
	40 ✦	41 ✦	42 ✦	6
c. Identify a detail inappropriate to the main idea	43 ✦	44 ✦	45 ✦	
	46 ✦	47 ✦	48 ✦	6
d. Reorganize sets of sentences into a logical order	49 ✦	50 ✦	51 ✦	
	52 ✦	53 ✦	54 ✦	6
III. EDITING				
a. Proofread and identify a mechanical error in a writing sample	55 ✦	58 ✦	57 ✦	
	58 A	59 ✦	60 ✦	5
b. Identify mechanical error in a writing sample and select appropriate correction	61 ✦	62 D	63 ✦	
	64 ✦	65 ✦	66 B	4
IV. WRITING SAMPLE				

ESSAY SCORE: 10

WHAT IS THE SCORE FOR THE ESSAY?

RESPONSE WAS INCORRECT AND THIS RESPONSE WAS SELECTED

Summary of Student Performance - Writing

	Number of Items Correct	Percent of Items Correct
Cluster I	27	90
Cluster II	24	100
Cluster III	9	75
Total Multiple Choice	60	91
Cluster IV - Writing Sample Score	10	
Total Writing Score	92	

THIS SCORE IS A COMBINATION OF THE MULTIPLE-CHOICE AND ESSAY SCORES

NEW JERSEY STATEWIDE TESTING SYSTEM
1983-84 HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY TEST
INDIVIDUAL STUDENT REPORT
GRADE 9 MATHEMATICS

Student: Sex:
Date of Birth:
District:
School:
Math Class Code: Test Date:

Clusters and Skills	Item Numbers and Responses			No. Corr.
I. COMPUTATION - FRACTIONS				
a. Add and subtract fractions	1 ✦	49 ✦	68 ✦	3
b. Add and subtract mixed numbers	2 ✦	50 ✦	69 ✦	3
c. Multiply whole number by proper fraction	3 D	51 ✦	70 ✦	2
d. Divide mixed number by fraction	4 ✦	52 ✦	71 B	2
II. COMPUTATI-				
a. Add decimals	5 ✦	53 ✦	72 ✦	3
b. Multiply decimals	6 B	54 ✦	73 ✦	2
c. Divide decimals	7 ✦	55 ✦	74 D	2
III. COMPUTATION - PERCENTS				
a. Convert decimals to percents	8 ✦	56 ✦	75 ✦	3
b. Find number when % of number is given	9 ✦	57 ✦	76 ✦	3
c. Convert percents to fractions	10 ✦	58 ✦	77 A	2
IV. NUMBER CONCEPTS				
a. Round decimals greater than one	11 ✦	31 B	78 ✦	2
b. Estimate	12 ✦	60 ✦	81 ✦	2
c. Determine relative size of fractions	14 ✦	32 ✦	79 ✦	3
V. MEASUREMENT AND GEOMETRY				
a. Add, subtract, multiply, divide measures	13 A	35 ✦	80 ✦	2
b. Solve problem involving temperat-	14 B	34 ✦	81 ✦	2
c. Identify complementary/supplementary angles	33 ✦	33 ✦	82 C	3
d. Understand sum of angles in triangle = 180°	15 ✦	35 ✦	82 ✦	2
e. Evaluate formula - cone, pyramid, rect solid	16 ✦	36 D	83 ✦	2
f. Compute area of irregular figure	37 ✦	84 ✦		2
VI. PRE-ALGEBRA				
a. Evaluate an expression	17 ✦	39 ✦	87 ✦	3
b. Arithmetic operations on signed numbers	18 ✦	40 ✦	88 ✦	3
c. Simplify an expression	19 ✦	41 ✦	89 ✦	3
d. Evaluate expression - whole numbers to a power	20 ✦	42 ✦	90 ✦	3
VII. PROBLEM SOLVING				
a. Read, interpret data from graphs	61 ✦	62 ✦	63 ✦	3
b. Estimate shortest route between two points	28 A	29 B	30 C	3
c. Compare percent and fraction discounts	21 ✦	43 ✦	62 ✦	3
d. Solve percent problem with sales tax	22 ✦	44 D	63 ✦	2
e. Solve multi-step percent problem	23 ✦	45 ✦	64 ✦	2
f. Compute average of a series of numbers	24 ✦			1
g. Solve problem - olving proportions	25 ✦	46 ✦	65 ✦	3
h. Solve problem involving money	26 ✦	47 ✦	66 ✦	3
i. Solve problem involving time	27 ✦	48 ✦	67 ✦	3

INDICATES WRONG RESPONSE WAS SELECTED

Summary of Student Performance - Mathematics

	Number of Items Corr-	Percent of Items Correct
Cluster I	10	83
Cluster II	7	78
Cluster III	8	89
Cluster IV	8	89
Cluster V	13	76
Cluster VI	12	100
Cluster VII	21	84
Total Multiple Choice	79	85

Total Mathematics Score: 85

Figure 1
Sample Individual Student Report

BEST COPY

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

This section of the report will provide information concerning East Windsor students' HSPT results in reading, writing and mathematics as they compare to the State of New Jersey, Mercer County, the "I" DFG group, and the Suburban-rural community type group. Table B provides the mean cluster scores by subtest area for 1983-84 East Windsor ninth grade students.

TABLE B
Mean Cluster Scores

SUBTEST AREA	CLUSTER TOPIC	EWR MEAN CLUSTER SCORE
Reading	Literal Comprehension	84.5
	Inferential Comprehension	83.0
	Critical Comprehension	86.8
	Study Skills	83.5
Writing	Sentence Structure	81.7
	Organization of Ideas	88.1
	Editing	76.4
	Essay Writing (Possible 12)	8.4
Mathematics	Fractions	82.4
	Decimals	79.7
	Percents	66.2
	Number Concepts	65.0
	Measurement/Geometry	58.5
	Pre-Algebra	74.7
	Problem Solving	68.7

It would appear from the data that the ninth grade students attained the highest cluster mean in reading on critical comprehension (86.8%). In writing, the students were strongest in organization of ideas (88.1%) while in math, the best student performance was observed in fractions (82.4%). On the essay section, out of a possible 12 points, East Windsor students scored a mean of 8.4.

Presented in Table C are East Windsor HSPT results as compared to the various reference groups - New Jersey, Mercer County, the "I" DFG group and the suburban-rural group. On ALL cluster areas, with the exception of the DFG grouping, East Windsor student performance was better than the other reference groups.

Table C

East Windsor Regional/Reference Group Comparisons

Subtest Cluster	EWR	"I" DFG	Sub-Rural	Mercer	NJ
READING					
Literal Comprehension	85	86	82	78	79
Inferential Comp.	83	84	80	75	76
Critical Comprehension	87	88	83	76	78
Study Skills	84	85	81	76	77
WRITING					
Sentence Structure	82	83	80	76	77
Organization of Ideas	88	89	86	82	83
Editing	76	80	75	69	71
Essay	8.4	8.6	8.1	7.7	7.6
MATHEMATICS					
Fractions	82	84	79	74	76
Decimals	80	84	81	78	79
Percents	66	68	63	59	60
Number Concepts	65	66	60	57	57
Measurement/Geometry	59	63	54	50	50
Pre-Algebra	75	78	70	64	65
Problem Solving	69	70	65	60	61

The next table, Table D, provides the distribution of East Windsor students' scores within specific score ranges on the three subtests administered. The greatest percentage of students in the highest range of 81-100 was found to be in reading (70%) followed by writing (66%). The lowest percentage of students attaining scores in this high range was in math (33.3%).

Table D
Distribution of Subtest Scores
N = 427

Score Range	Reading # Students	Reading %	Writing # Students	Writing %	Mathematics # Students	Mathematics %
0 - 20	0	0	0	0	3	.7
21 - 40	11	2.6	5	1.2	20	4.7
41 - 60	19	4.5	20	4.7	97	22.7
61 - 80	98	23.0	120	28.1	165	38.6
81 - 100	299	70.0	282	66.0	142	33.3

Table E provides the distribution of students attaining each of the possible 12 scores on the writing section essay. Over 85% of the East Windsor students scored a 7 or better.

Table E
Distribution of EWR Scores on the Essay Section

Score	Number of Students	% of Students
0	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
3	2	.5
4	4	.9
5	12	2.8
6	38	8.9
7	67	15.7
8	100	23.4
9	81	19.0
10	73	17.1
11	35	8.2
12	15	3.5

The essay topic for this year was as follows:

> Think of something important that happened in your life. It may have been happy or sad, painful or enjoyable. Write an essay in which you tell what happened and why it was important to you.

As was done last year, the writing essay section was scored by a "Holistic" scoring process developed by ETS. Each student's essay was read by two readers independently. The scoring was based on a six point scale (6-0). Readers were asked to rate each essay for their overall impression of the student's work. A total of 220 readers were selected from the State's Language Arts teachers with 90,000 papers to read. Two chief readers and six assistant readers selected "range finder" papers for the 220 readers to use as guides.

Comparisons between the 1983-84 essay results and those of 1982-83 are presented in Table F. A total of 358 ninth grade students were tested in 1982-83 while 427 students were tested in 1983-84. The data shows that more students in 1983-84 attained higher total essay scores than students in the 1982-83 group. The mean essay score for students in 1982-83 was 7.6. This figure increased to 8.4 for the 1983-84 ninth grade students.

Table F
Distribution of Essay Scores
1982-83 and 1983-84

Score	% of Students 1983-84	% of Students 1982-83
0	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	1
3	.5	2
4	.9	3
5	2.8	6
6	8.9	16
7	15.7	20
8	23.4	24
9	19.0	15
10	17.1	11
11	5.2	2
12	3.5	1

The data displayed in Table G shows a comparison of the percentage of East Windsor ninth grade students' distribution of subtest scores as compared to the state-wide data. On ALL subtest results, East Windsor had a higher percentage of students attaining scores in the 81-100 range as compared to the total state figures.

Table G

State/East Windsor Distribution Comparisons

Score Range	READING		WRITING		MATH	
	EWR	NJ	EWR	NJ	EWR	NJ
0 - 20	0	1	0	.4	.7	.6
21 - 40	2.6	4.3	1.2	5.5	4.7	14.4
41 - 60	4.5	11.9	4.7	23.3	22.7	31.5
61 - 80	23.0	32.2	28.1	49.5	38.6	31.1
81 -100	70.0	51.5	66.0	21.2	33.3	22.5

On Table H, a comparison of the distribution of East Windsor and the State essay scores is provided. A total of 29% of East Windsor ninth grade students had a score of 10 or better as compared to 20% for the state-wide total.

Table H
Comparison of East Windsor/State Essay Scores

Score	% of EWR Students	% of New Jersey Students
0	0	.9
1	0	0
2	0	.9
3	.5	1.9
4	.9	4.4
5	2.8	7.3
6	8.9	12.6
7	15.7	16.2
8	23.4	19.9
9	19.0	15.6
10	17.1	11.6
11	8.2	6.1
12	3.5	2.6

Since this is the first year that the district is receiving feedback on the new HSPT instrument, it is felt that more specific information is needed to determine where students at the 6 - 8 level may need more stress in specific skill areas. Table I provides a matrix of the ninth grade students' HSPT results by their former 6 - 8 school. In addition, a column also is provided which displays the test results for students who did not receive their 6 - 8 preparation in East Windsor schools. As can be noted on the table, very litte difference exists between students who received their preparation at the Kreps or Rogers Schools. Larger differences, however, are found when the results of students who are new to East Windsor are reviewed. This is especially true when analyzing the math cluster areas. Here differences in scores are as much as 11 points.

TABLE I
Mean Cluster Scores
Kreps/Rogers and New Students

SUBTEST	CLUSTER TOPIC N =	EWR 427	KREPS 258	ROGERS 124	NEW 45
Reading	Literal Comprehension	85	86	84	79
	Inferential Comprehension	83	85	82	76
	Critical Comprehension	87	87	88	82
	Study Skills	84	85	84	75
	MEAN - Reading	84	85	84	77
Writing	Sentence Structure	82	83	81	78
	Organization of Ideas	88	89	88	82
	Editing	76	78	76	71
	MEAN - Writing (Mult.)	83	84	83	78
	Essay (Possible 12)	8.4	8.5	8.5	7.9
	MEAN- Total Writing	84	85	85	82
Math	Fractions	82	84	82	74
	Decimals	80	81	79	75
	Percents	66	69	64	54
	Number Concepts	65	67	65	54
	Measurement/Geometr	59	60	59	49
	Pre-Algebra	75	76	76	65
	Problem Solving	69	71	68	57
	MEAN - Math	70	72	70	60

The next section of this report will focus on specific cluster areas of strengths and weaknesses. These will be broken down by school so that staff members at the 6 - 8 level will be aware of student and program needs in their buildings. In addition, the High School staff will be better aware of the needs of new students coming into East Windsor at the ninth grade level.

In order for a topic area to be considered a strength, the overall performance on the items for the topic area had to exceed an average of 85% of the students responding correctly. On the other hand, a weakness is indicated if 70% or less of the students respond correctly to topic items.

Table J
Student Strengths
N = 427

Kreps	Rogers	New Students
READING		
synonyms	meaning by context	synonyms
relevant info.	meaning by affixes	meaning/affixes
cause/effect	predict outcome	table of contents
meaning by context	fact/opinion	
meaning by affixes	dictionary	
dictionary	table of contents	
index		
table of contents		
fact/opinion		
WRITING		
several ideas in sentence	complete sentences	complete sentence
complete sentences	inappropriate detail	inappropriate detail
support main detail		
inappropriate details		
MATHEMATICS		
mult. proper fraction	mult. proper fraction	add decimals
add decimals	add decimals	
evaluate an expression		

Table K
Student Weaknesses
N = 427

Kreps	Rogers	New Students
READING		
None	None	identify events in sequence infer main idea interpret figurative language infer sequence, time infer comparisons use card catalog summarize data
WRITING		
sentence construction error	sentence construction error	sentence construction error
MATHEMATICS		
divide decimals percents to fractions estimate size of fractions measure identify angles 180 degree angles shape formulas compute area of irregular figure simplify expression discounts mult. step percent time problem	find # when % given divide decimals percents to fraction estimate size of fractions measure identify angles 180 degree angles shape formulas compute area of irregular figure simplify expression discounts mult. step percent time problem	add/sub. fractions divide decimals find # when have % percent to fraction estimate size of fractions measures identify angles 180 degree angle shape formulas area of irregular figure simply expression graphs route between two points discounts sales tax mult. step percent proportions money problems time problems

Presented on Table L are the results of student responses pertaining to general information questions. The first question asked students if they have always attended school in East Windsor. A total of 60% (277) of the 462 students responded "yes" to this item. The next question asked the ninth grade students how many times since the first grade have they changed schools because they had moved. Fifty-eight percent of the students indicated they had not moved while another 33% (153) stated they changed schools from 1 to 3 times since entering first grade. The remaining 9% (42) moved 4 or more times since first grade.

Question three focused on the number of days that the students said they were absent during the school year between September and March. A total of 70% (323) indicated that they were absent at least 1 to 10 days while another 14% (65) said they were out of school 11 to 20 days. Only 12% (55) of the 462 ninth grade students stated that they were "never" absent.

As far as present school programs are concerned, 45% (208) of the students felt that they were enrolled in college preparatory courses. Another 43% said they were in a "general" program while the remaining 12% were involved in business or vocational programs.

The next set of questions asked the students about their reading writing and math interests and abilities. The students were about evenly divided when asked if they have difficulty reading things they want to read. A total of 50% of the students responded "never" while 45% said "sometimes."

When asked questions about their writing habits, 35% of the students said they "usually" jot down ideas and notes before writing something. Another 49% said they jot down notes "sometimes." Out of the remaining students, 10% "never" write anything down before hand while 4% of the students say they "never" write any papers. Taking writing habits a step further, the students were questioned if they edit their work before turning it in to a teacher. Again, the students were about evenly divided. A total of 43% said "usually" while 47% indicated this was only true "sometimes."

In school, after papers have been returned to the student, 10% say they work on the papers again to try to improve them. Another 46% said they do that "sometimes" while 40% (185) stated they "never" try to improve completed papers. The last writing item in this section asked the students if they ever write stories for their own enjoyment. The majority of the students (60%) responded "maybe once a year." Another 24% felt this was true maybe "once every few months" while only 12% said they write stories for their own enjoyment "about once or twice a month."

The next two questions asked students about their use of calculators and computers. Fifty-five percent of the ninth grade students stated that they use calculators in their math clases "sometimes." Another 10% of the students responded to this item by stating "most or all of the time" while 33% of the students said "never." The results were not as high when questioned about the use of computers in classes. Only 13% of the ninth grade students stated that they used computers in their classes while 87% of the students said "never" when answering this question.

As far as math class enrollment is concerned, 81% of the ninth grade students were enrolled in either an algebra or geometry course at the time of the HSPT administration. The remaining students were enrolled in either a general math or business math course. It can be assumed, based on the above data, that all ninth grade students were enrolled in some type of math course at the time of the testing.

The last series of questions on this general information survey asked the students how they would rate their performance on the three subtest areas of the HSPT. For the reading and writing sections, 63% of the students said they felt that their performance was "satisfactory." A total of 29% (writing) and 27% (reading) felt their performance was "very good." The remaining students stated they felt their performance was "unsatisfactory or poor." In math, the figures changed slightly. Thirty percent of the students felt they did "very well" while 56% said "satisfactory." A total of 13% of the students felt that their performance was "unsatisfactory or poor."

Table L
Responses to General Information Questions
N = 462

Question		Response
1. Always attended school in East Windsor		60% (277)
2. Changed schools & moved since 1st grade		
	none	58% (268)
	1 to 3 times	33% (153)
	4 or more	9% (41)
3. Absent from school this year	never	12% (55)
	1 to 10 days	70% (323)
	11 to 20 days	14% (65)
	20 days plus	4% (19)
4. Present High School program	academic	45% (208)
	general	43% (199)
	business/vocational	12% (55)
5. Having difficulty reading	sometimes	45% (208)
	never	50% (231)

Table L (continued)
Responses to General Information Questions
N = 462

Question		Response
6. Make notes before write paper	usually	35% (162)
	sometimes	49% (226)
	never	10% (46)
	do not write papers	4% (19)
7. Edit work before turning in	usually	43% (199)
	sometimes	47% (217)
	never	6% (28)
8. Improve completed papers	usually	10% (46)
	sometimes	46% (213)
	never	40% (185)
9. Write stories for enjoyment	yearly	60% (277)
	once every few months	24% (111)
	once or twice a month	12% (55)
10. Computers used in classes	never	87% (402)
	sometimes	13% (60)
11. Use calculator in math	never	33% (153)
	sometimes	55% (254)
	most/all of the time	11% (55)
12. Math course taking	general math	16% (74)
	algebra/geometry	81% (374)
	business math	3% (14)

Perceived Performance on HSPT

SUBTEST	very good	satisfactory	unsatisfactory/poor
Reading	27%	63%	9%
Writing	29%	63%	8%
Math	30%	56%	13%

The last table in this report, Table M, provides a comparison of the 1983-84 HSPT results for the eight 9 - 12 districts in Mercer County. As can be noted on the table, the State Department has made some changes in the DFG rankings of the districts based on the new 1980 census. East Windsor is now ranked an "E" on this socioeconomic variable.

Table M
High School Proficiency Test
Mercer County District Comparisons
Mean Scores

DISTRICT	1970 DFG	1980 DFG	Reading			Writing			Essay			Math		
			R	N	%	R	N	%	R	N	$\bar{X}$S	R	N	%
E. Windsor	I	H	4	427	84	4	427	83	5	427	8.4	5	427	70
Ewing	G	G	6	290	79	6	290	79	6	290	7.8	6	290	65
Hamilton	D	F	7	945	78	7	946	78	6	946	7.8	7	945	61
Hopewell	I	I	1	196	89	2	196	88	3	196	9.3	3	196	77
Lawrence	H	I	4	197	84	4	197	83	4	197	8.7	4	197	72
Princeton	J	J	1	218	89	1	218	89	1	217	10.0	2	218	79
Trenton	A	A	8	858	58	8	866	62	8	873	5.4	8	856	43
W. Windsor	J	J	3	235	87	3	235	87	2	235	9.5	1	235	80

* Key: R = rank in county
N = number of regular students tested
% = mean percent of items correct
$\bar{X}$S = mean essay score out of possible 12 points

In reviewing the above table, the reader should be cautioned in making absolute judgments when comparing the various districts' results. Both the types of communities as well as numbers of students tested vary greatly. Such districts as Princeton, Hopewell, and West Windsor do not at this time possess the variety of family backgrounds that are currently included in the East Windsor Regional School District.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In summary, it would appear from the first year's results of the High School Proficiency Test (HSPT) that East Windsor students faired well on their first attempt at the new test. Of course, there are skill areas that will need greater emphasis and stress at both the middle school and high school levels if further improvements are to be made.

Students appeared to be well-prepared in such areas as critical comprehension, literal comprehension and the ability to organize their ideas. Editing the written work of others, however, was found to be a skill area that will need more work.

On the essay section, the 427 ninth grade students attained an average score of 8.4, an improvement over the 7.6 average of last year. With the district's K - 12 emphasis on writing this year, even more improvement should be realized next year.

In math, student performance on fractions and decimals was satisfactory. However, much more stress state-wide will need to be made in geometry, measurement, percents, number concepts and problem solving. In time, with more stress and practice, these skill areas also should show improvement.

As mentioned in this report, 45 (11%) of the 427 regular ninth grade students tested were NEW to the East Windsor Regional School District last September. Their test results in many skill areas were as much as 11 points lower than those students who received their elementary and middle school training in our district's schools. It is understandably difficult for the high school staff to bring these students up to district standards in the short six month period of September to March. It would appear that for future years, however, the high school staff should attempt to assess as soon as possible the potential weaknesses of"newto the district" ninth grade students since these students also will be required to pass the HSPT in order to graduate from Hightstown High School.

We began the State's basic skills assessment program during the 1972-73 school year. Over these last twelve years much improvement has taken place in New Jersey's and in East Windsor's students' performance on the various instruments administered. As with the great strides East Windsor students made on the Minimum Basic Skills Test (MBS), it is certain that the district's students will meet the challenges of the new High School Proficiency Test.